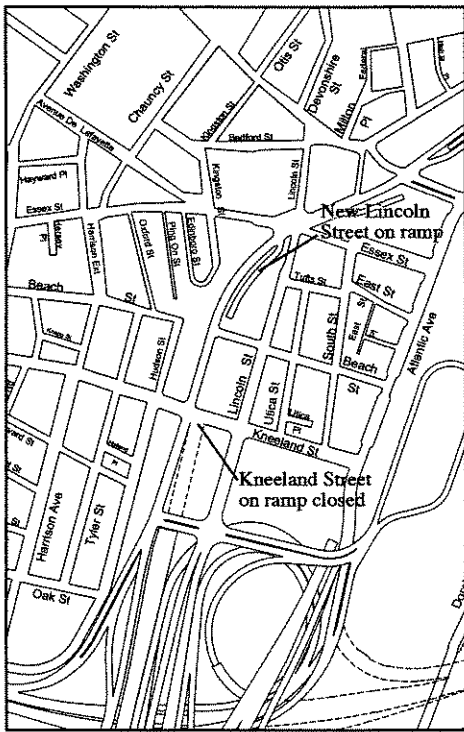

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Downtown Reconfigurations to I-93 South Implemented; Motorists Adjust to New Patterns on Local Roadways



The last of the Big Dig's major detours came to an end in January with the closing of the temporary Kneeland Street on-ramp, the addition of a fourth I-93 southbound lane from the Dewey Square Tunnel to the Southeast Expressway, and the opening of a new on-ramp at the intersection of Lincoln Street, Essex Street, and the Surface Road. To access this new ramp from the Surface Road southbound, motorists must stay to the left once they pass Summer Street.

The additional lane along this stretch of roadway has added significantly to the capacity of the highway. It has also improved the flow of traffic to the Southeast Expressway because, unlike the temporary Kneeland Street ramp, which required drivers to merge with existing highway traffic, the new ramp allows drivers coming from the Financial Dis-

TIP Alert

See the MPO activities update on page 2 for details on a recently approved amendment and two adjustments to the fiscal years 2005–2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Also see the calendar on page 4 for information on two TIP "How To" seminars that have been scheduled for municipal officials interested in learning more about the TIP development process or in receiving technical assistance in completing TIP project information forms.

trict, Chinatown, or the South Station area to enter I-93 southbound in their own lane.

The new roadway configuration, coupled with decreased entering capacity to I-93 at certain locations due to the widening of I-93, has resulted in a higher traffic

■ Travel Pattern Changes cont. on p. 3

Meetings on Transit Commitments Rescheduled; Comment Period Extended

Severe winter weather forced the cancellation of two public meetings that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) had planned for January. These meetings have been rescheduled for February and will be held in Somerville and Jamaica Plain (see calendar on page 4 for details).

The purpose of the meetings is to hear comments on the process DEP and EOT will conduct to make decisions regarding—and, to the extent appropriate, make changes to—the transit regulation (310 CMR 7.36) that provides for air quality improvements through the implementation of the three remaining Central

Artery/Tunnel project transit commitments. The projects are the Arborway Green Line Extension, the Blue Line/Red Line Connector, and the Medford Hills Green Line Extension.

The meetings are a follow-up to a similar joint DEP/EOT public meeting held on December 14 at the State House. At that meeting, the outline for the public process to reevaluate the three transit commitments, the associated regulatory framework, and the criteria for project reevaluation was presented. Interested citizens and elected officials submitted several hours of public comment to DEP and EOT.

The additional public meetings are being held to allow further testimony, and priority will be given to individuals who were unable to provide testimony at the December 14 meeting. Written comments will also be accepted at the meet-

■ Comment Period *cont. on p. 3*

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BOSTON REGION MPO ACTIVITIES



BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

At its meeting on January 20, following a 35-day public comment period and upon the recommendation of its Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, the Boston Region MPO approved an amendment to the fiscal years 2005–2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The amendment programs:

- \$832,400 in funding for the Cape Ann Transportation Authority to rehabilitate its bus maintenance and storage facility in Gloucester and to perform preventative maintenance on its bus fleet.
- \$312,300 for the purchase of buses and vans in Lynn, Peabody, and Danvers.
- Funding, not to exceed \$31 million (the amount to be determined following the reauthorization of TEA-21 legislation), for the procurement of 85 emission-controlled diesel buses for the MBTA.

At the same meeting, the MPO approved two TIP adjustments. Funding for the Silver Line Phase III project was adjusted to reflect the \$3.6 million specifically earmarked for preliminary design work in the latest extension of federal transportation legislation. The second adjustment provided for the carryover of \$1.9 million in funding that had been programmed in the FYs 2004–2008 TIP for design and permitting work associated with the Route 18 widening project in Weymouth and Abington.

The MPO waived the public review process for these adjustments since both of these projects had already undergone public review and the funding can not be spent for any other purpose.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

In addition to developing recommendations to the MPO on the above TIP amendment and adjustments, the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee approved a \$100,000 work program for the Central Transportation Planning Staff to provide technical assistance to MassHighway in its I-93/I-95 Woburn/Reading Interchange Study.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

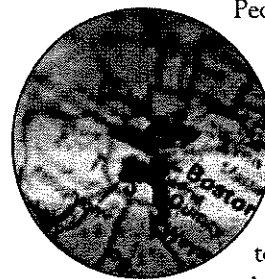
In January, Deputy Secretary Astrid Glynn of the Executive Office of Transportation briefed Advisory Council members on the Transportation Reform Legislation of 2004, which brought agencies under the wing of the Secretary of Transportation's office. This reorganization provides for better planning and coordination in the transportation system, with Massachusetts moving closer to having a state department of transportation. It will also create efficiencies by reducing previous overlapping responsibilities of some of the transportation agencies.

The February Council meeting will feature a briefing from one of our neighboring MPOs. See the calendar on page 4 for details.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The nomination period for AACT's annual election of officers has opened. Nominees must be an active member of AACT and either an MBTA user, a human-services advocate, or a senior citizen. Nomination papers and five signatures from active AACT members for each nominee must be received at AACT's office or postmarked by 5:00 P.M. on May 24. Candidates are also required to submit a 50-word personal profile. For further details on nomination procedures and the duties of officers, contact AACT coordinator Janie Guion at (617) 973-7507 (telephone), (617) 973-7089 (TDD), or guion@ctps.org. The election will be held on May 25.

MetroFuture: Beginning Phase II



People from all over the Boston region gathered at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center on January 27 to continue the work on MetroFuture,

which is the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's large-scale participatory initiative to plan for the future of the 101 communities in metropolitan Boston. MAPC is working with community and educational entities such as the Boston Foundation, the Boston College Citizens Seminars, and the University of Massachusetts Boston in this regionwide, collaborative planning effort.

Over 400 people from all walks of life—students, members of the business community, state agency representatives, local officials, professionals in the fields of housing, health, and transportation, and interested citizens—attended the event (the second in the Boston College Citizens Seminar series) to discuss the results of the first phase of the MetroFuture process, which began last year, and to make plans for the second phase.

Seminar presentations included an overview of the visioning sessions that were conducted over the last year throughout the region and the results that were produced.

Thomas Menino, mayor of Boston, and Harriet Tregoning of the Smart Growth Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C., highlighted the value of thinking regionally to solve problems.

The MetroFuture process will be ongoing throughout 2005. For more information or to preview upcoming MetroFuture events, contact MAPC at (617) 482-2770 or visit www.metrofuture.com.

Suggested Alternative Routes to I-93 South

■ Travel Pattern Changes *cont. from p. 1*

volume wanting to enter I-93 southbound at Southamptton Street (South Bay). A period of adjustment is expected while motorists learn that it is no longer necessary to use local streets in the downtown area to avoid congestion on I-93 South. To assist in this adjustment the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority has suggested the following alternative routes for motorists seeking to avoid afternoon peak congestion at the Southamptton Street on-ramp to I-93 South.

- *From the Boston Medical Center area (short-term relief):* North on Harrison Avenue to Herald Street; right on Herald Street to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From the Newmarket Square area:* Southamptton Street to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From Park Square/South End:* Arlington Street or Tremont Street to Herald Street to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From the Financial/Theater Districts:* Congress Street to Purchase Street to Surface Road to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From Chinatown:* Essex Street to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From Government Center/Beacon Hill:* New Chardon Street to the I-93 South on-ramp.
- *From Back Bay/Fenway:* Storrow Drive to the I-93 South on-ramp at Leverett Circle. (Even though southbound traffic cannot use the new underpass at Leverett Circle, the opening of the new underpass has significantly reduced delay for all Storrow Drive traffic.)
- *From East Cambridge:* Gilmore Bridge to Rutherford Avenue; right on Rutherford Avenue to the I-93 South on-ramp.

In addition, the Turnpike Authority suggests that motorists revisit their route selections this spring when an additional on-ramp to I-93 South opens at Congress Street.

Urban Mobility Report Shows Congestion Increasing

In September 2004 the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) released its annual Urban Mobility Report, which provides data on the performance of the transportation systems in all urban areas of the United States with a population exceeding 500,000.

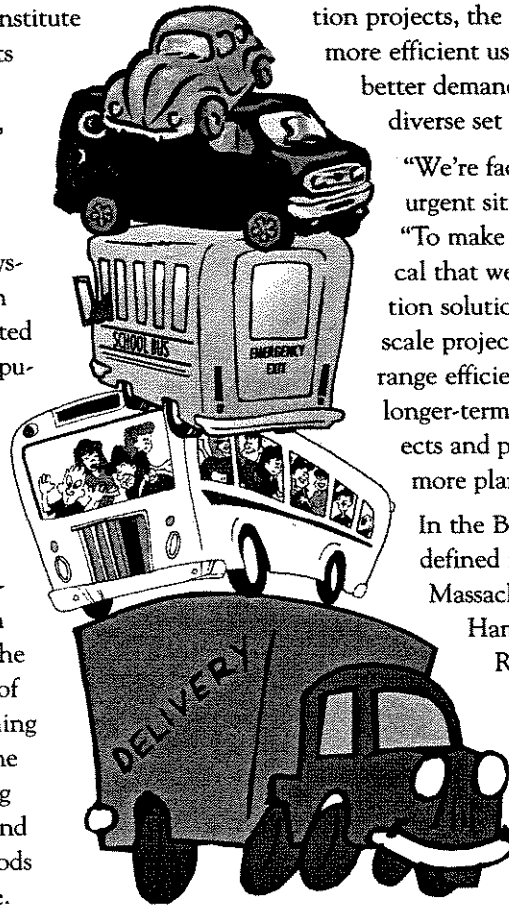
The report shows that over the past 20 years traffic congestion has been growing across the nation in cities of all sizes, consuming more hours of the day and affecting more travelers and shipments of goods than ever before.

"We can see pretty clearly what 20 years of almost continuous economic growth can do to us," says Tim Lomax, one of the study's authors. "If we're lucky enough to sustain this growth and the funding levels and options do not increase from current trends, we shouldn't be surprised if we see even more congestion."

The TTI study ranks areas according to several measurements, including:

- Annual peak period ("rush hour") delay per traveler, which has grown from 16 hours to 46 hours nationally since 1982.
- Annual financial cost of traffic congestion, which has ballooned from \$14 billion to more than \$63 billion since 1982 (as expressed in 2002 dollars).
- Wasted fuel, totaling 5.6 billion gallons lost to engines idling in traffic jams.

TTI researchers say that the problem has grown too rapidly and is too complex to be addressed by a single solution. In addition to new road and public transportation projects, the report recommends more efficient use of current roadways, better demand management, and a diverse set of land use options.



tion to new road and public transportation projects, the report recommends more efficient use of current roadways, better demand management, and a diverse set of land use options.

"We're facing an increasingly urgent situation," says Lomax. "To make real progress, it's critical that we pursue all transportation solutions—short-range, small-scale projects and policies, mid-range efficiency programs, and longer-term, more significant projects and programs that require more planning and design time."

In the Boston region, which is defined in the study as eastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, and the state of Rhode Island, annual delay per traveler was 54 hours in 2002, compared to 20 hours in 1982. There was a total of 81.1 million hours in travel delay in 2002, costing the region \$1.4 billion.

■ Mobility Report *cont. on p. 4*

■ Comment Period *cont. from p. 1*

ing. In addition, DEP and EOT have extended the written comment period from February 4 to March 4 at 5:00 P.M. Comments may be sent either by mail or e-mail to:

Robert W. Gollidge, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
One Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108
robert.gollidge@state.ma.us

and

Daniel A. Grabauskas, Secretary
Executive Office of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3170
Boston, MA 02116

The meeting sites are wheelchair accessible. For materials in accessible formats, call ADA coordinator Donald Gomes at (617) 556-1057 (telephone) or (800) 298-2207 (TDD).

MEETING CALENDAR

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

**AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING,
10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON**

Wednesday, February 9
Regional Transportation
Advisory Council 3:00 P.M.
Conference Room 4

Thursday, February 17
Boston Region MPO 10:00 A.M.
Transportation Planning and
Programming Committee Meeting
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, February 23
Access Advisory Committee
to the MBTA (AACT) 1:00 P.M.
Conference Room 4

Monday, February 28
MBTA Rider Oversight
Committee 4:00 P.M.
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Thursday, March 3
Boston Region MPO 10:00 A.M.
Transportation Planning and
Programming Committee Work Session
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Call (617) 222-5179 for date and
room location
MBTA Board of Directors 1:00 P.M.

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

Thursday, February 3 (Snow date: February 10)
MBTA Public Meeting: 7:00 P.M.
Fairlawn Street Footbridge, Malden
Malden City Hall
City Council Chambers
200 Pleasant Street, Malden

Tuesday, February 8
MassHighway Public Hearing:
Proposed Replacement of Horse
Access Road Bridge over Route 24
in Randolph 6:30 P.M.
Randolph Town Hall
Lincoln Room
41 South Main Street, Randolph

Tuesday, February 15
Transportation Improvement
Program (TIP) "How To" Seminar* 9:00 A.M.
Woburn City Hall
Council Committee Room
10 Common Street, Woburn

Wednesday, February 16
Transportation Improvement
Program (TIP) "How To" Seminar* 9:00 A.M.
Weymouth Public Works Offices
Second Floor Conference Room
120 Winter Street, Weymouth

State Implementation Plan
Transit Commitments 6:30 P.M.
Agassiz School
20 Child Street, Jamaica Plain

Monday, February 28
State Implementation Plan
Transit Commitments 6:30 P.M.
Somerville High School
81 Highland Street, Somerville

Tuesday, March 1
Charles River Basin Citizen
Advisory Committee 4:00 P.M.
The McCormick Building, 21st Floor
One Ashburton Place, Boston

Wednesday, March 2
Metropolitan Area Planning
Council Winter Meeting:
Continental Breakfast and Program 8:45 A.M.
Hyatt Regency Hotel
One Avenue de Lafayette, Boston
(Contact Sandra Cadet at (617) 451-2770,
ext. 2010, or SCadet@mapc.org, by
February 23 to reserve breakfast, which
costs \$10.00.)

Meeting dates and times are subject to change; please
call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional
transportation meetings open to the public are listed
on the Boston Region MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

*This seminar is intended for municipal officials
who wish to learn more about the Boston
Region MPO's TIP process. Participants are
asked to preregister by contacting Sean Daly at
(617) 973-7100 or seandaly@ctps.org.

■ Mobility Report cont. from p. 3

The region is the ninth most congested urbanized area in the nation. The rate of increase in congestion since 1982, however, was lower than the national average. Public transportation helped to hold down the increase, providing a travel delay savings of 62.5 million hours and thus a cost savings of \$1.1 billion.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the 2004 Urban Mobility Report, visit the Texas Transportation Institute's Web site at <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums>.

TRANSREPORT

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